

Nooshin, L. (2017). 'BME' Perspectives on Music Higher Education. Paper presented at the 'BME' Perspectives on Music Higher Education, 2 May 2017, Cambridge, UK.



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**Original citation:** Nooshin, L. (2017). 'BME' Perspectives on Music Higher Education. Paper presented at the 'BME' Perspectives on Music Higher Education, 2 May 2017, Cambridge, UK.

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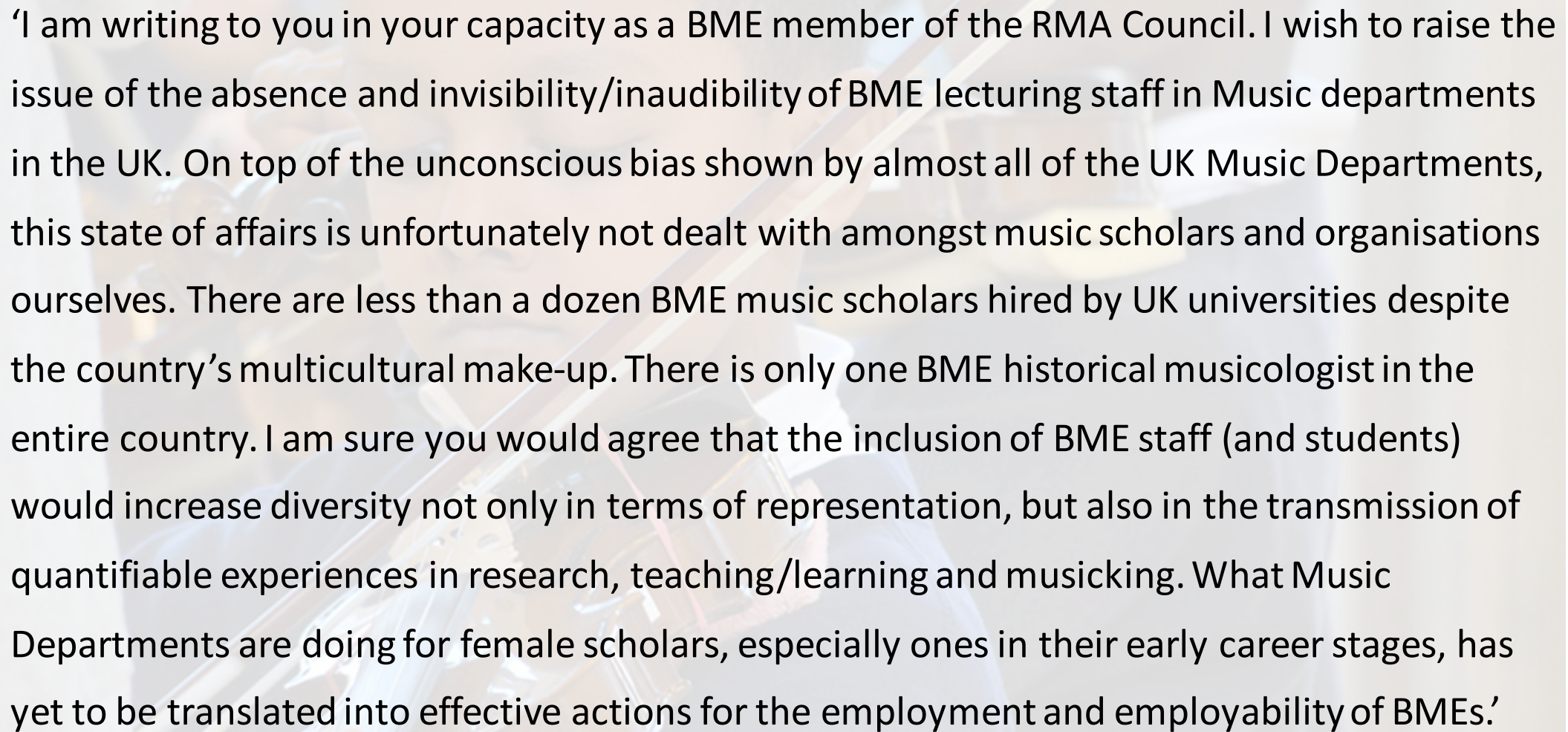


# **‘BME’ Perspectives on Music Higher Education**

Annual Conference of the National Association for Music in  
Higher Education

University of Cambridge, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017

Laudan Nooshin, City, University of London




'I am writing to you in your capacity as a BME member of the RMA Council. I wish to raise the issue of the absence and invisibility/inaudibility of BME lecturing staff in Music departments in the UK. On top of the unconscious bias shown by almost all of the UK Music Departments, this state of affairs is unfortunately not dealt with amongst music scholars and organisations ourselves. There are less than a dozen BME music scholars hired by UK universities despite the country's multicultural make-up. There is only one BME historical musicologist in the entire country. I am sure you would agree that the inclusion of BME staff (and students) would increase diversity not only in terms of representation, but also in the transmission of quantifiable experiences in research, teaching/learning and musicking. What Music Departments are doing for female scholars, especially ones in their early career stages, has yet to be translated into effective actions for the employment and employability of BMEs.'



<http://www.kendraprestonleonard.com/2017/04/01/music-privilege-walk-statements/>

### Music Privilege Walk Statements

1. If your parents/guardians could pay for your instrument or you had use of a free school instrument, step forward.
2. If you had access to a professional quality instrument before age 18, step forward.
3. If you experienced physical and/or psychological/emotional abuse by a music teacher, step backwards.
4. If you experienced sexual harassment by a music colleague, step backwards.
5. If you could afford to travel more than 4 hours for post-secondary school auditions, step forward.
6. If your parents/guardians could afford the time off to drive you to auditions, step forward.
7. If you went to summer music programs, step forward.
8. If you owned a metronome, tuner, music stand, instrument cleaning supplies, and method books (in your language), step forward.
9. If the language spoken in your high school music rehearsals was your first language, step forward.
10. If you had a reliably quiet place to practice, step forward.
11. If your high school offered Music Theory AP, step forward.
12. If you were ever taught "music theory" as a separate concept before college, step forward.
13. If you could afford to pay for meals on school band/choir/orchestra trips, step forward. (Two steps if the school paid for you!)
14. If you could afford to do maintenance or repairs without sacrificing something else, step forward.
15. If you had a reliably safe space to store your instrument when not playing it, step forward.
16. If your parents/guardians attended your concerts, step forward (some have to miss for work or other things).
17. If you had a piano or keyboard in your house growing up, step forward.
18. If your musical instructions conflicted with other extra-curriculars, like sports or scouting, step backwards.
19. If the music that is your passion is written down, step forward.
20. If the music that is your passion is communicated primarily through an oral tradition, step backwards.
21. If you had dance lessons or went to organized dances, step forward.
22. If you were not allowed/not encouraged to dance, step back.

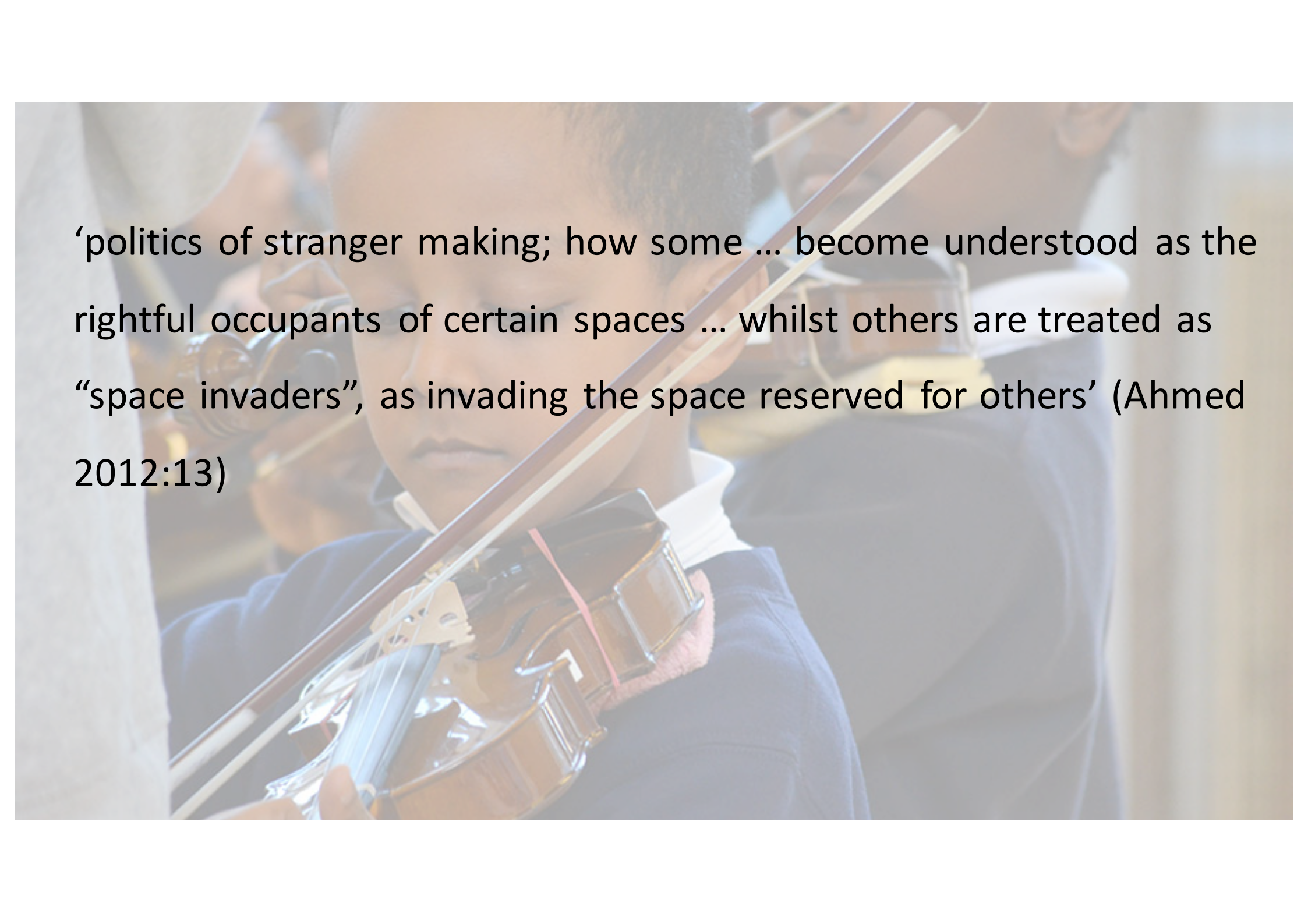
A young boy with dark skin is playing a violin. He is wearing a dark blue shirt. In the background, other students are visible, some also playing instruments. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the boy in the foreground.

‘how we experience one category depends on how we inhabit others.’

(Sara Ahmed. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*.  
Duke University Press, page 14).

‘there are hierarchies within hierarchies as far as colour is concerned, and as a Chinese academic in the UK I experience race quite differently from my South Asian, Middle Eastern or Black counterparts’.



A young boy with dark hair is the central focus, playing a violin. He is wearing a dark blue sweater over a white collared shirt. The violin is a light-colored wood with a dark bow. In the background, other children are visible, also playing violins, though they are out of focus. The overall scene suggests a music class or rehearsal.

‘politics of stranger making; how some ... become understood as the rightful occupants of certain spaces ... whilst others are treated as “space invaders”, as invading the space reserved for others’ (Ahmed 2012:13)

